

May 5, 2020

CSUPERB is pleased to announce the 2020 class of Presidents' Commission Scholars. Thirteen undergraduates will be carrying out faculty-mentored biotechnology research projects on 8 different CSU campuses.

CSUPERB recognizes that research experiences are critical to engaging and graduating students interested in biotechnology careers. The focus of this program is to increase the number of lower-division undergraduates who have access to a full-time research experience. The Presidents' Commission Scholars are supported by a \$6,000 scholarship, in addition to \$2,000 in support for the faculty mentor's laboratory.

CSUPERB received 16 applications from 9 CSU universities in response to this year's request for proposals. Awards were made to 81% of the proposals received.

The 2020 CSUPERB Presidents' Commission Scholars are (in alphabetical order):

1. **Christian Aspiras** (2nd Year, Biology, San José State University), "How a Microbial Toxin Promotes Lung Damage and *S. pneumoniae* Escape."
Mentor: Walter Adams
2. **Diana Davalos** (2nd Year, Mechanical Engineering, California State University, Long Beach), "How does impact affect the human body response causing injury?"
Mentor: Daniel Whisler
3. **Leanne Deocampo** (1st Year, Civil Engineering, California State University, Long Beach), "Biological Hydrogen Production from Anaerobic Digesters."
Mentor: Pitiporn Asvapathanagul
4. **Mason Galipeault** (1st Year, Biological Sciences, San José State University), "The effect of Metformin on CRISPR-Cas9 cutting efficiency."
Mentor: Jennifer Johnston
5. **Priscilla Hsieh** (1st Year, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo), "Analysis of Phenol Components and Antioxidant Activities in Three Different Grape Pomaces and Seeds"
Mentor: Ike Kang
6. **Raed Reyad Kayed** (2nd Year, Engineering/Biomechanics, San Francisco State University), "Detecting biomechanical interactions of the human fallopian tube and embryo using their cellular-scale biomechanical properties and morphology."
Mentor: Mojtaba Azadi Sohi

7. **David Lopez** (1st Year, Biology, Humboldt State University), “Investigation of cholesterol biosynthesis pathway in supporting survival during prolonged nutrient deprivation in human embryonic kidney cells.”
Mentor: John Steele
8. **Michaelangelo Marcellana** (1st Year, Biological Science, California State University, Fullerton), “Sex-based differences in fungal immune defense in *Drosophila melanogaster*.”
Mentor: Parvin Shahrestani
9. **Lucy Moriarty** (2nd Year, Wine and Viticulture, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo), “Characterization of Stomatal Response Behavior in Grape Rootstock Selections to Diurnal Shifts in Water Status.”
Mentor: Jean Dodson Peterson
10. **Diana Owen** (2nd Year, Biochemistry, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo), “Elucidation of an antibiotic biosynthetic pathway through genetic knockout in *Micromonospora echinospora*.”
Mentor: Katharine Watts
11. **Alissa Reed** (1st Year, Biological Sciences, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo), “Assessing the Effects of Varying Extracellular Matrix Composition on In Vitro Three-Dimensional Human Colorectal Tumor Models.”
Mentor: Christopher Heylman
12. **Leeluleilani Stockton** (2nd Year, Biochemistry, California State University San Marcos), “Preparation and Biological Activity Study of Benzotriazoles.”
Mentor: Robert Iafe
13. **Catherine Yang** (1st Year, California State University, Los Angeles), “Evaluation of Smad2 linker mutants for loss of function BMP phenotypes in adult *Drosophila* wings.”
Mentor: Edward Eivers

For more information about this program, see the program portfolio at the CSUPERB website (<https://www2.calstate.edu/impact-of-the-csu/research/csuperb/Pages/grants-and-awards-programs.aspx>) or contact Bianca Mothè (Interim Executive Director, CSUPERB; bmothe@csusm.edu). All CSUPERB grants and awards can be searched at the program’s database: <http://csuperb.org/grants/database/>. Program impacts, including student outcomes and annual reports, can be found at the program dashboard: <https://csuperb.org/grants/csuperb-data-dashboard/>.